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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 551
By Kisber

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend developer Jack Belz for his efforts to preserve the Peabody Place historic district in Memphis.

WHEREAS, the city of Memphis had lost many of its most cherished landmarks to neglect and deterioration; and

WHEREAS, over the past thirty years, cities across the country have been turning their backs on growth in the nation's urban centers; and

WHEREAS, the City of Memphis is fortunate to have a significant historic area bounded by Gayoso Avenue, Main Street, Peabody Place and Front Street, which is now celebrated as Peabody Place; and

WHEREAS, except for the foresight of developer Jack Belz, that historic asset might have been lost to neglect and deterioration; and

WHEREAS, despite the words of cynics and a real estate recession, Jack saw the beauty and promise in restoring the Peabody Hotel in 1981; and

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WHEREAS, Mr. Belz acquired six historic buildings in downtown Memphis in a real estate auction, in which there were no other bidders, to develop the largest historic preservation project in the state of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, this block of buildings once housed the upscale Gayoso Hotel, which was frequented by such dignitaries as presidents and generals, and in later years was the location of the vibrant, flourishing Goldsmith's Department Store; and

WHEREAS, in order to execute his vision for the entire historic block, Jack used all of his talents and resources to assemble a highly qualified team of design and construction professionals; and

WHEREAS; Mr. Belz's efforts to preserve an entire block of downtown Memphis have not only been acknowledged, but also applauded, by local, state and national historic preservation groups; and

WHEREAS, the renovation of the Peabody Place historic district is the culmination of Jack's commitment to preserving a piece of Memphis' past for the residents of its future; and

WHEREAS, the Peabody Place historic district is now home to urban dwellers, high-end retail establishments, elegant restaurants and state-of-the-art offices; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Belz's commitment to the arts led him to provide Memphis with a treasure of Chinese art from his personal collection, which is now on permanent display at the Peabody Place Museum and Gallery; and

WHEREAS, under Jack's leadership the project known as the Peabody Place Historic District has earned 16 local, regional and national design awards, including its selection as the Design of the Decade (1990-1999) by the Memphis Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, which award recognizes the project as the most significant piece of architecture in Memphis in the 1990s; and

WHEREAS, all the citizens of the state of Tennessee owe Jack Belz a debt of gratitude for creating the urban renaissance that has transformed the heart of Memphis; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That this General Assembly hereby confers its commendation upon developer and visionary Jack Belz for reclaiming Memphis' downtown, preserving its heritage and being the catalyst for the resurgence of downtown commerce.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.